



Sheffield
General
Cemetery
Trust

CHARGES & REGULATIONS	
AT THE	
SHEFFIELD GENERAL CEMETERY,	
ECCLESALL ROAD.	
	£. s. d.
A single Interment—Children under six years of age	0 4 6
Do. do. from six years and upwards	0 6 0
A single Interment, with an Inscription of name, age, and time of decease, on stone	1 0 0
Interment of a still born child	0 1 0
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Land for a private Grave, varying } in price according to situation } £1. 10s. 0d. & upwards.	
For sinking the same nine feet, including all expenses of the } first Interment . . . . .	0 17 6
For each future Interment therein .. . . .	0 14 6
An extra charge will be made for depths below nine feet.	
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A private Vault, or Crypt, for a single Interment	5 5 0
A family Vault, varying according } to size and situation } £10. 0s. 0d. & upwards.	
For the first Interment in a Vault	0 14 6
For each subsequent Interment therein	1 2 0
Extra charge for Interments before one o'clock in the day,	0 10 6

Source: William White's General Directory of Sheffield 1845

The Chadwicks' Embezzlement Discovered

The minutes of the meeting of the Directors of the Sheffield General Cemetery Company for 11 December 1848 contain a short but worrying entry. While previous entries were in the beautiful copperplate handwriting of Adam Chadwick, Secretary, this was written by the Chairman himself in a jagged hand. It reads:

The Subject of the Secretary's Conduct was brought before the Meeting. The accounts and Books were examined.

What exactly had the Secretary been up to? Something serious obviously, for by their next meeting in January Adam Chadwick had been replaced by Samuel Ellis as Secretary. A report was read on the general state of the accounts and books and a sub-committee appointed to investigate.

Adam Chadwick (1824-1884) was the son of William Chadwick (1783-1860), the first Sexton of the Cemetery. He had been appointed Secretary to the Cemetery Company in the wake of the 1841 theft from the iron safe and the sacking/resignation of William Thornhill Kidd, the first Chaplain and Secretary. The Directors had hoped to make some economies and decided that they could appoint Adam Chadwick at a much lower salary than they had previously been

paying. The 1841 Census shows Adam, then aged 18, as living in the Gatehouse of the Cemetery with his parents William and Sarah and his brother Henry. Both Adam and Henry are described as Attorneys Clerks. When Adam was appointed Secretary in May 1841 his father was required to sign a personal guarantee for him.

In the following years Adam was re-appointed Secretary with no sign of trouble until this minute of December 1848. Events moved swiftly from there: at the Directors' meeting on 16 January 1849, William Chadwick was asked to give some explanation of the state of the accounts. His answers were clearly unsatisfactory, and the matter was put into the hands of the Cemetery's solicitors. On 25 January it was reported that the solicitors had arranged for Robert Chadwick (another of William's sons and Adam's older brother), a paper manufacturer from Derby, to pay £60 (around £6,500 in 2025) to the Company 'in consideration of the deficiencies in the accounts of his brother and father with the Company...'. Clearly a significant embezzlement had taken place over a substantial period. William Chadwick remained in post for the time being and kept his accommodation in the Cemetery Gatehouse but he was tightly managed by Samuel Ellis, the new Secretary, and not allowed to handle money. Nothing more is heard of Adam.

By 16 March Samuel Ellis was ready to give his full report on the problems with the accounts and registers and detail the work he'd had to do to put them to rights:

- The burial registers were in disarray and had been neglected for a long time. 1,100 names had to be entered into the index and around 400 other corrections made.
- No entries had been made in the grave register for the public graves since 1839 and comparatively few in that for the private graves. To remedy this, 2,000 entries had to be inserted.
- The report continues to describe the terrible state of Section RR in the Cemetery:

...which being the cheapest, is the most in request, and has the fewest number of stones laid down, in comparison with the Interments. There were several instances in which from the Books, two different parties appeared to have paid for the same Grave; and others were entered to wrong numbers: for in consequence of which this Section of the Ground was in a state of all but inextricable confusion. This rendered it necessary to send for the parties, at separate times, to identify their

Graves; and yet it was important so to conduct the inquiry as not to convey to their minds the idea that there was anything of consequence in the matter. This was a task of no ordinary delicacy and difficulty. I am happy, however, to be able to state, that this Section of the Ground has been brought to a more perfect condition than I had any expectation that it ever would.

- A whole new register had to be prepared of the owners of grave plots, and purchasers paying by instalments were chased up and the amounts outstanding confirmed with them.
- The report concluded that, insofar as could be determined, about £180 was missing. (This was later upped to £196, nearly £22,000 in 2025).

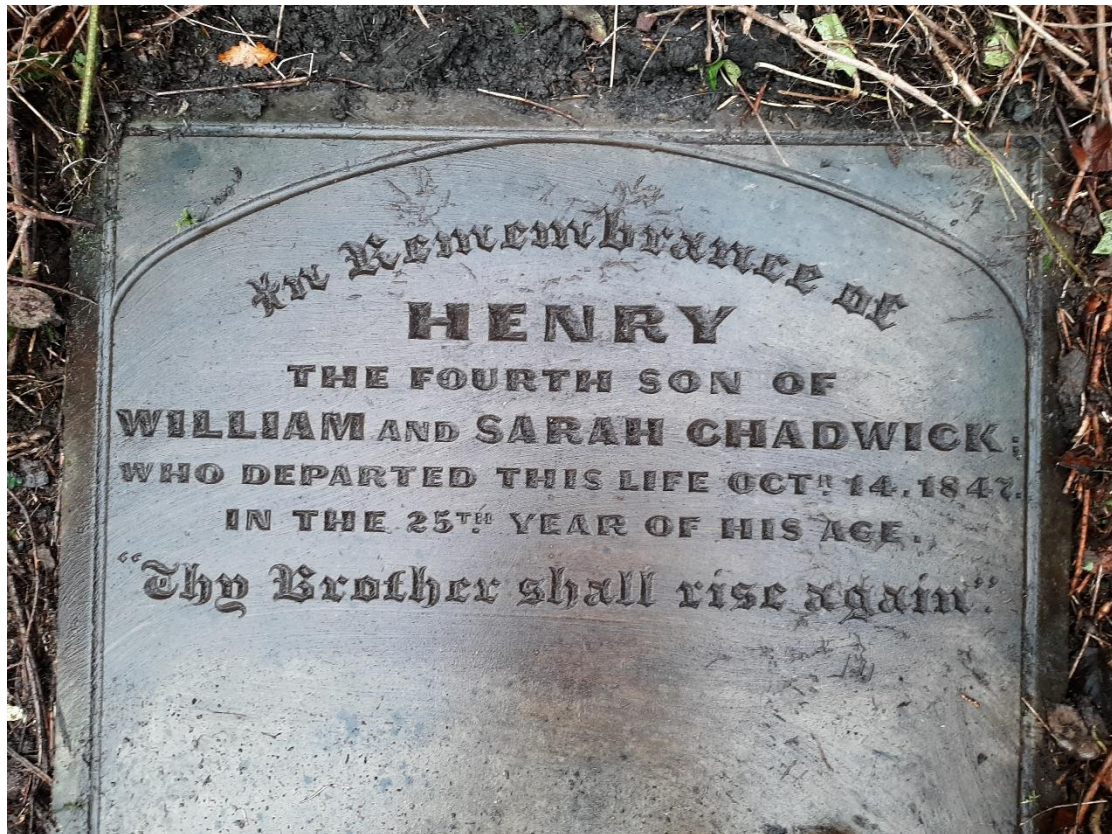
What an appalling picture of deceit and confusion the report paints! And the report revealed the scale of the financial loss suffered by the Cemetery, as only a third of the estimated missing £180 was recovered from Robert Chadwick. It's worth noting that the problems with recording went right back to 1839 when William Thornhill Kidd was Secretary. Was he or William Chadwick responsible for the lack of entries in the Registers? Did this in some way contribute to what appears to have been some sort of breakdown that Kidd suffered? It documents the awful but nonetheless entertaining picture of attempts to sort out Section RR, where plots appeared to have been sold twice, without alerting anyone to any kind of problem. Samuel Ellis was given a bonus of £10 10s for succeeding in the heroic task of sorting out the books and finally William Chadwick was given one month's notice to quit the employment of the Cemetery.

At their meeting of 9 April the Directors hired Thomas Walker to replace William Chadwick as Sexton (this was not a successful appointment and he was sacked in October) and the minutes record a rather sad coda to William Chadwick's time as an employee of the Cemetery:

William Chadwick Sexton having been called in to make some enquiries of him about the period of his leaving the Company's service, he mentioned to the Directors that he owed the Company for a Grave in which he had interred his Son. It was resolved: That the debt owing by William Chadwick for the Grave in question be cancelled; and that he pay for the Stone work as early as he conveniently can.

His son Henry, brother to Adam, had died of consumption in 1847 and was buried in the Nonconformist area of the Cemetery (plot II 80). The inscription on the stone reads:

In remembrance of Henry, the 4th son of William and Sarah Chadwick who departed this life Oct 14 1847, aged 24 years. "Thy brother shall rise again".



Source: Nicky Woods

The Directors must have approached the Cemetery Company AGM in August 1849 with trepidation. What took place was reported in some detail in the Sheffield Independent of Saturday 25 August 1849. The Directors started with the embezzlement: admitting to the loss of £196 which had taken place over several years, the '...too much confidence...' placed in the Sexton and Secretary, the decision to accept the £60 from Robert Chadwick instead of '...adopting other measures...' (presumably prosecution and all the attendant bad publicity), and their final optimism that with '...more rigid surveillance ... over the general affairs of the company... better prospects might be entertained...' for the future. They then moved swiftly on to an upbeat report on the plans for the new Anglican area of the Cemetery. But the shareholders were not happy. One said they had clearly paid too low a salary to the Secretary to secure anyone remotely competent. Another, that the method of bookkeeping that had been used had rendered the accounts, even

now after all Samuel Ellis' work, full of inaccuracies and fundamentally unintelligible. How could they declare a dividend for the shareholders when they had no idea whether the Company could actually pay it? Mr Thomas Smith, a solicitor, was particularly damning. He said '...he was satisfied that the accounts were not "cooked", and that the directors had acted with honesty and integrity; and had no intention to place an inaccurate statement before the meeting...'; but really there was no way they could either declare a dividend or approve the official Report and Accounts (one of the main points of the AGM). How incredibly shaming for the Directors!

Was this embezzlement carefully planned and executed? Or were William and Adam Chadwick simply unable to resist helping themselves to the substantial amounts of money floating round? Interestingly, when recruiting for the replacement Secretary and Sexton, the Directors emphasised that the postholders must devote the entirety of their time to the job. Maybe there had been a bit of moonlighting going on as well? Clearly the Directors had trusted too much, were totally unaware of the state of the accounts and registers and neglected to carry out even the most basic oversight of the Company's employees and the Cemetery's finances. But at least they seem to have learnt some lessons from this disaster in terms of recruitment. A more rigorous appointment process was put in place for the selection of the next Secretary when Samuel Ellis handed in his notice in June 1849. The advert in the *Sheffield Independent* on Saturday 30 June 1849 stated that applicants had to provide character references. The post offered a good salary and the postholder would be required to live on-site in what had been the Chaplain's House rent-free. The appointee would also be required to provide a legal guarantee of £200 to cover any losses incurred by his dishonesty. Michael Thomas Bedford was duly selected from the 47 applicants. Surely the Directors could relax now?